

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4394

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 5610

EXDIS

FOR AMBASSADOR RYAN ARA FROM POPPER

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PINS, CI

SUBJECT: THOUGHTS FOR TALKING WITH WILLOUGHBY

1. IN YOUR LUNCH TODAY AND YOUR OTHER CONTACTS WITH FEDERICO WILLOUGHBY, PINOCHET'S PRESS ADVISER, YOU MAY WANT TO DRAW ON FOLLOWING THOUGHTS.

2. WILLOUGHBY'S CURRENT STATE OF MIND IS SUMMARIZED IN BARBARA WHITE'S EXCELLENT TELEGRAM (USUN 3627). WILLOUGHBY HAS CHANGED OVER THE LAST YEAR. HE RECOGNIZED THAT CHILE'S DISASTROUS PUBLIC RELATIONS POSITION IN THE US, EUROPE AND THE THIRD WORLD IS MAJOR LIABILITY. WHILE WE DO NOT BELIEVE HE CAN BE COUNTED AMONG PINOCHET'S MOST INFLUENTIAL ADVISERS, HE IS IN CLOSE AND CONTINUING CONTACT WITH HIM. WHAT WILLOUGHBY IS TOLD IN WASHINGTON WILL BE DULY REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT.

3. I CAN SEE TWO AREAS IN WHICH DISCUSSION MIGHT BE ESPECIALLY USEFUL.

4. FIRST, WHILE THE GOC IS NOW TOO DEEPLY DUG IN TO DO VERY MUCH ABOUT THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION WORKING GROUP'S PRELIMINARY REPORT FOR DISCUSSION IN THE UNGA, IT MIGHT BE URGED TO TAKE SOME CONSTRUCTIVE STEP TO RE-ESTABLISH A DIALOGUE WITH THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION. IT MAY BE THAT AMBASSADOR BAZAN CAN TALK PRIVATELY WITH THE WORKING GROUP WHILE HE IS IN EUROPE.

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HE OR SOME OTHER EMISSARY COULD LOOK INTO WAYS IN WHICH, BY

RESTRUCTURING THE WORKING GROUP OR OBTAINING FROM IT A SATISFACTORY STATEMENT REGARDING ITS PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS, THE WAY COULD BE OPENED FOR RECEIVING THE GROUP PRIOR TO ITS FINAL REPORT TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION NEXT YEAR. THERE MAY BE OTHER WAYS IN WHICH THE GOC CAN AGAIN BEGIN AT LEAST TO PRESENT ITS CASE TO THE INTERNATIONAL BODIES INVESTIGATING IT. I THINK IT UNLIKELY THAT IN ITS PRESENT FRAME OF MIND THE JUNTA WOULD REACT FAVORABLY TO SUCH IDEAS, BUT IT WOULD BE WELL TO PLANT THE SEED.

5. MORE FUNDAMENTALLY, YOU MIGHT ASK WILLOUGHBY WHAT HE HONESTLY THINKS WILL BE THE LONGER-RANGE ORIENTATION OF THIS MILITARY REGIME. WHEN THE JUNTA CAME TO POWER, IT PRESENTED ITSELF AS A NECESSARY CLEANSING AGENCY WITH INTENDED TO SET THE STAGE FOR A SOUNDER DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IN THE FUTURE. ALMOST TWO YEARS HAVE NOW PASSED, AND THIS MOTIF IS INCREASINGLY MUTED. INSTEAD, THE AUTHORITARIAN CAST OF THE REGIME IS IF ANYTHING MORE CLEARLY APPARENT THAN EVER, AND PINOCHET HAS INDICATED THAT NO CHANGE NEED BE EXPECTED FOR A LONG TIME.

6. WE OURSELVES SEE LITTLE PROGRESS IN RETURNING TO TRADITIONAL CHILEAN LEGAL PRACTICES AND INSTITUTIONAL NORMALITY. THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL SECURITY DETENTIONS CONTINUES WITHOUT SUBSTANTIAL MODIFICATION, DESPITE THE NEW NATIONAL SECURITY LAW. THE CASE OF THE 119 "DISAPPEARANCES" THROWS A GRISLY LIGHT ON THE HANDLING OF THE JUNTA'S POLITICAL OPPONENTS. THE LATEST CRACKDOWN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHILE WILL STRENGTHEN THE BELIEF THAT INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM IS TEMPORARILY DEAD HERE, AND WILL NECESSARILY CRIMP OUR ATTEMPTS TO MAINTAIN SOME SEMBLANCE OF ACTIVITY IN CHILE ON THE PART OF THE FORD FOUNDATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, AND OTHER FORMERLY INTERESTED AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS.

7. IT IS NOT TOO LATE FOR THE JUNTA TO START TO REVERSE THIS DISCOURAGING TREND. THERE ARE THINGS WHICH COULD BE DONE ON THE INTERNAL FRONT. WHILE THIS IS A MATTER FOR THE CHILEANS AND NOT FOR US, IT WOULD CERTAINLY BE HELPFUL IF THE GOC WERE TO REACH THE CONCLUSION THAT AFTER TWO YEARS OF CONTROL IT COULD BEGIN TO LOOSEN UP ITS INTERNAL RESTRICTIONS. SOMETHING COULD BE DONE TO RESTRAIN THE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES (DINA). THE WRIT OF AMPARO COULD BE USED TO ESTABLISH SOME SORT OF ULTIMATE CONTROL BY CIVILIAN TRIBUNALS OVER THE DECISIONS OF MILITARY

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COURTS AND THE ACTIONS OF SECURITY FORCES. THE PROTECTIVE PROVISIONS OF THE NEW NATIONAL SECURITY LAW COULD BE UNVARIINGLY APPLIED. THE LEVEL OF THE STATE OF SIEGE REGULATIONS COULD BE LOWERED. PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN HELD IN DETENTION CENTERS FOR MANY MONTHS WITHOUT SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE OF SUBVERSION COULD BE AMNESTIED. AND THERE ARE OTHER STEPS OF THIS CHARACTER WHICH COULD BE TAKEN.

8. THERE IS ANOTHER GUT QUESTION WHICH YOU MIGHT CONSIDER RAISING. WHILE THE JUNTA HAS BEEN QUITE REMARKABLY SUCCESSFUL IN MAINTAINING BROAD PUBLIC SUPPORT DESPITE ECONOMIC HARDSHIP AND POLITICAL REPRESSION, THERE ARE THOSE WHO FEEL THAT THIS SUPPORT IS NOW BEGINNING TO DWINDLE. IT IS LEGITIMATE TO ASK, AS THE CHURCH DOES IN CHILE, WHETHER THERE SHOULD NOT BE SOME SCOPE IN CHILE FOR POLITICAL RECONCILIATION -- NOT WITH MARXIST FORCES, BUT WITH THOSE ELEMENTS OF THE CENTER AND THE NON-MARXIST MODERATE LEFT WHICH COULD GIVE THE JUNTA AN INFUSION OF FRESH TALENT AND A BROADER POLITICAL BASE. SOONER OR LATER, IT SEEMS TO US HERE, THE JUNTA WILL HAVE TO ABANDON ITS VIEW THAT VIRTUALLY ALL EXPRESSED OPPOSITION IS SUBVERSIVE. SO MANY PROFESSIONALS AND OPINION LEADERS HAVE BEEN ANTAGONIZED THAT IT IS NOW VERY LATE TO TRY TO RECAPTURE SUPPORT. BUT WE BELIEVE IT WOULD CERTAINLY BE WORTH THE EFFORT.

9. PLEASE LET US KNOW HOW YOU COME OUT WITH WILLOUGHBY. WE WILL BE GLAD TO FOLLOW UP AS APPROPRIATE FROM THIS END.
POPPER

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